

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 DPW-01 ACDA-19 OMB-01 SR-02 ORM-03

AID-20 SAJ-01 EA-11 EUR-25 AF-10 SPC-03 EB-11 NSC-10

RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 CEA-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01

USIA-15 DRC-01 /221 W

----- 073915

R 081029Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1358

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 4908/1

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG, US, IN

SUBJECT: PAK-BANGLADESH IMPASSE

REF: A) STATE 217267, B) STATE 216769,

C) ISLAMABAD 9584, D) ISLAMABAD 9628

1. SUMMARY: OUR READING OF REFTELS IS THAT NEITHER SIDE HAS CHANGED ITS INTERPRETATION OF THE DELHI AGREEMENT AND EACH IS SEEKING MORE ACTIVE EFFORTS BY THE UNITED STATES TO MOVE THE OTHER SIDE TO ACCEPT ITS VIEW. SINCE THE SUGGESTIONS OF KEVAL SINGH AND THE CHINESE AMBASSADOR ARE AT CROSS PURPOSES, ACTIVE PARTICIPATION ON OUR PART TO RESOLVE THE IMPASSE OVER RECOGNITION AND WAR CRIMES TRIALS WOULD CAST USG IN THE ROLE OF BROKER. IN OUR VIEW, NO URGENT INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES NOR OUR CHOSEN POSTURE TOWARD MUJIB'S GOVERNMENT WOULD WARRANT SUCH AN UNEXPECTED CHANGE OF ROLE BY USG. OUR CURRENT POSTURE HAS SERVED US WELL IN DACCA, CONFIDENTIAL

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ENCOURAGING FORWARD-LOOKING EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE

SUBCONTINENTAL RELATIONS AND CONVEYING THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF ONE SIDE TOWARD ANOTHER. IF WE ARE NOW TO ADVOCATE THAT EITHER SIDE UNDERTAKE SPECIFIC ACTION, WE SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO FACE ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT PERCEPTION BY BDG OF OUR OBJECTIVES ON SUBCONTINENT. END SUMMARY

2. TWO FACTORS MADE THE DELHI AGREEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO BDG POLITICALLY: CONTINUED BDG INSISTENCE THAT IT WOULD NOT TALK DIRECTLY WITH GOP EXCEPT ON BASIS OF "SOVEREIGN EQUALITY" (I.E., RECOGNITION); AND ADHERENCE TO ITS "RIGHT" TO HOLD WAR CRIMES TRIALS. THESE ARE THE TWO POINTS THAT MUJIB HAD CONSISTENTLY EMPHASIZED SINCE HIS RETURN IN JANUARY 1972. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT BDG FEELS IT HAS COMPROMISED ENOUGH; ON THE ISSUE OF RECOGNITION THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE. WHILE EXPRESSING ITS WILLINGNESS TO ADHERE TO AGREEMENT THAT TRIALS ARE SUBJECT TO TRILATERAL TALKS, BDG HAS NEVER INDICATED SLIGHTEST WILLINGNESS TO GIVE UP TRIALS AS A PRE-CONDITION TO RECOGNITION. DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF BHUTTO AND PERHAPS BASICALLY ENVIOUS OF HIS NEGOTIATING SKILL, BDG IS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY TO GIVE UP ITS ONE REMAINING BARGAINING POINT SIMPLY ON THE PROMISE THAT RECOGNITION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. PAKISTAN'S RELINKING OF THE TRIALS TO UN MEMBERSHIP AFTER THE AGREEMENT, CONTRARY TO WHAT BDG HAD ANTICIPATED, CAN ONLY HAVE REINFORCED OLD SUSPICIONS.

3. THE WAR CRIMES TRIALS ARE NO LONGER A BURNING PUBLIC ISSUE HERE. THE IMPRESSION GATHERED FROM THOSE WILLING TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT IS THAT TOO MUCH TIME HAS PASSED FOR TRIALS TO BE MEANINGFUL. FROM SENATOR SAXBE'S PUBLIC COMMENTS HERE IN AUGUST, BENGALIS KNOW THAT USG WOULD BE RELIEVED IT TRIALS NEVER TAKE PLACE. THE IMPORTANT POINT, HOWEVER, IS NOT THE PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TRIALS BUT MUJIB'S PERCEPTION OF THEM. GIVEN HIS EMPHATIC PUBLIC STANCE ON THE TRIALS, THE POSSIBILITY THAT MUJIB WOULD TOTALLY GIVE

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UP THE TRIALS WITHOUT AT LEAST SOME TOKEN HONORING OF HIS COMMITMENT TO "JUSTICE" IS UNLIKELY. IT IS MORE IN KEEPING WITH HIS PERFORMANCE OF THE PAST TWO YEARS TO LET THE MATTER DRIFT. WHAT HE APPEARS MOST ANXIOUS TO AVOID IS ANY SUSPICION THAT HE HAS BEEN BESTED BY BHUTTO, THAT HE HAS TRADED HIS PRINCIPLES FOR PAKISTANI RECOGNITION. MUJIB COULD AGREE TO POSTPONE THE TRIALS BECAUSE IN THAT WAY HE WOULD HAVE GOT THE

BENGALEES BACK. WHAT COULD HE SHOW IN RETURN FOR
GIVING UP THE TRIALS NOW? CERTAINLY NOT THE
BLESSING OF PAKISTANIS WHO ARE STILL THE BETES
NOIRES, THE CAUSE OF ALL BANGLADESH'S ILLS. THE
FRIENDSHIP OF THE PRC? NOT SOMETHING MUJIB CAN
PUBLICLY ADMIT AS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, PARTICULARLY
IN VIEW OF THE RECENTLY FORMED UNITED FRONT WITH
PRO-SOVIET PARTIES. MEMBERSHIP IN THE U. N.? NOT
A VERY STRONG POINT TODAY WHEN BDG HAS ARGUED THAT
RECOGNITION BY 112 COUNTRIES AND MEMBERSHIP IN MANY
UN AFFILIATES SERVES THE SAME PURPOSE. WHAT MUJIB
NEEDS IS SOME FACE-SAVING WAY OUT OF THE WAR CRIMES
TRIAL CORNER HE HAS BOXED HIMSELF INTO; HE WILL NEED
A PLAUSIBLE SCHEME THAT WILL ALLOW HIM GRACEFULLY TO
GIVE WAY IN SUBSTANCE ON THE TRIALS, IF NOT TOTALLY
IN FORM.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 4908/2

4. WHILE INDIA'S BESIRE TO GET OUT OF THE MIDDLE ON
THE TRIALS ISSUE IS UNDERSTANDABLE, IT STRIKES US AS
UNREALISTIC AS LONG AS INDIA REMAINS CUSTODIAN OF
THE PRISONERS. CONSIDERING THE LREVAILING INYMCIENCE

OF GOI IN DACCA AND ITS LEGITIMATE INTEREST IN
RESOLVING THE ISSUES LEFT OVER FROM THE WAR, INDIA'S
EXTRACTING OF CONCESSIONS FROM MUJIB IN THE PAST HAS
NOT BEEN EASILY ACCOMPLISHED. PART OF PROBLEM IS THAT
MUJIB IS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO CHARGES THAT HE IS
BEHOLDEN TO FOREIGN INTERESTS, PARTICULARLY TO INDIA
BECAUSE OF ITS PART IN THE LIBERATION. STILL, IF
GOI IS UNABLE TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE AND
TURNS INSTEAD TO SEEKING USG ASSISTANCE WITH BHUTTO,
IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT ANY EFFORT ON OUR PART
COULD MOVE MUJIB TO MAKE UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS. IT
IN FACT MIGHT WELL BACKFIRE IF WE APPEAR TO BE TAKING
THE PAKISTANI POSITION. IF SUCH AN OVERTURE ON OUR
PART WERE TO BECOME KNOWN, IT WOULD BE FURTHER GRIST
FOR THE SINO-PAK-U.S. CONSPIRACY RHETORIC SO
BELOVED BY THE LEFT ELEMENTS OF THE RULING PARTY AND
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ITS UNITED FRONT COHORTS. WHILE ANY RESULTANT ATTACK
ON US WOULD BE OF LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE, IT VERY WELL
COULD FURTHER CONTRIBUTE TO MUJIB'S RIGIDITY.

5. IT IS OUR VIEW THAT, UNLIKE THE INDIAN AND
PAKISTANI LEADERS AND OFFICIALS, BANGLADESH AUTHORITIES
STILL LACK THE SOPHISTICATION AND EXPERIENCE TO UNDER-
STAND AND ACCEPT SUGGESTIONS -- LOW-KEYED OR OTHERWISE --
FROM OUTSIDE PARTIES TO SETTLE THEIR PROBLEMS. ALREADY
FEELING BELEAGUERED ON THIS ISSUE, BDG IS FAR MORE
LIKELY TO REACT AS MUJIB HAS DONE EMOTIONALLY ON
OTHER OCCASIONS: THAT HE IS IN NOBODY'S POCKET AND
SUSCEPTIBLE TO NO PRESSURE FROM ANYONE. WE
THEREFORE SEE MUCH WISDOM IN CONTINUING, AS THE
SECRETARY HAS INDICATED, TO BE HELPFUL IN A REASONABLY USEFUL
WAY TO ENCOURAGE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS IN THE
SUBCONTINENT. WE PREFER TO LEAVE IT TO THE PARTIES
THEMSELVES TO DEVISE THE FORMULA TO OVERCOME THE
RECOGNITION-TALKS-TRIALS DILEMMA.
NEWBERRY

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